

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, CGEN, UR, US

SUBJECT: TRAVEL CONTROLS AND MULTIPLE EXIT AND REENTRY VISAS

REFS: MOSCOW 2435, STATE 42728,

1. SUMMARY. FEBRUARY 23 EMBASSY POL/INT CHIEF AND TRAVEL OFFICER PROVIDED MFA PROTOCOL SECTION OFFICIALS CHARGED WITH MANAGEMENT OF SOVIET TRAVEL CONTROLS (VACHNADZE AND LOPUSHINSKIY) THE COMPARATIVE STATISTICS CITED MOSCOW 2435. CORDIAL MEETING RESULTED IN LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE BEING PRODUCED BUT STATISTICS WERE RECEIVED WITH INTEREST AND VACHNADZE PROMISED TO PASS THEM ALONG. LATER MFA REACTIONS PROVED NOT TO BE SO BENIGN, WITH PROTOCOL INSISTING THAT TRAVEL NOTES WERE NEEDED FOR TRAVEL FROM MOSCOW TO VYBORG.

2. EMBOFFS PRESENTED MFA PROTOCOL OFFICIALS WITH COMPARATIVE TRAVEL STATISTICS ILLUSTRATING SUBSTANTIAL IMBALANCES AS TO TRIPS NOT REGISTERED TO OPEN AREAS AND CLOSED AREA ACCESS DENIED. VACHNADZE DEMURRED THAT IT WAS NOT WITHIN PROTOCOL'S COMPETENCE TO RESOLVE THESE QUESTIONS ONCE THEY HAS BEEN DECIDED ELSEWHERE AND THAT THEY ATTEMPTED TO BE AS HELPFUL AS POSSIBLE OTHERWISE WHEN DEALING WITH EMBASSY TRAVEL REQUESTS. WE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR PROTOCOL'S ASSISTANCE IN THE PAST AND HOPED THAT OUR CORDIAL WORKING RELATIONSHIP WOULD CONTINUE. NONETHELESS, IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT THE DEPARTMENT WAS CONSISTENTLY FORTHCOMING WHEN HANDLING SOVIET TRAVEL REQUESTS WHILE THIS WAS NOT THE CASE WITH MFA. IN PARTICULAR, THE REGULAR DENIAL OF EMBASSY TRAVEL TO

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OPEN AREAS "CLOSED FOR REASONS OF A TEMPORARY NATURE," AS WELL

AS THE REFUSAL OF CLOSED AREA ACCESS ON CONSULAR BUSINESS, RAISED SERIOUS QUESTIONS CONCERNING RECIPROCITY. WE ENDED WITH A RESTATEMENT OF OUR WILLINGNESS TO DO WHATEVER IS POSSIBLE IN BRINGING ABOUT RELAXATION OR ABOLITION OF TRAVEL CONTROLS.

3. LOPUSHINSKIY CALLED TRAVEL OFFICER FEBRUARY 26 WITH AN INQUIRY CONCERNING FIGURES FOR CONGEN LENINGRAD TRAVEL REQUESTS (MOSCOW 2435) WHICH INCLUDED 72 TRAVEL NOTES SUBMITTED FOR DIRECT AUTOMOBILE TRAVEL TO FINLAND VIA VYBORG. REQUESTS FOR TRAVEL NOTES IN THIS CASE WERE PERFECTLY LEGITIMATE, HE ARGUED, AS TRAVEL WAS BEING PERFORMED ON THE TERRITORY OF THE SOVIET UNION. SIMILARLY, TRAIN TRAVEL WITHIN THE SOVIET UNION ALSO REQUIRED A TRAVEL NOTE EVEN IF IT WAS DIRECT TRAVEL OUT OF THE COUNTRY.

4. EMBOFF COMMENTED THAT ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF MAKING COMPARATIVE TRAVEL STATISTICS AVAILABLE TO MFA WAS TO FACILITATE THE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF EXISTING TRAVEL CONDITIONS WITH A VIEW TOWARD EASING TRAVEL CONTROLS. THIS NEW REQUIREMENT IMPRESSED US AS A NEEDLESS STEP BACKWARD. VACHNADZE HAD BY NOW COME ON THE LINE AND BUREAUCRATICALLY MAINTAINED THAT ALL EMBASSY TRAVEL CONDUCTED WITHIN THE SOVIET UNION REQUIRED A TRAVEL NOTE UNTIL SUCH TIME AS SOVIET CUSTOMS HAD BEEN CLEARED.

5. EMBASSY PRACTICE IN THE PAST HAS BEEN TO SUBMIT A TRAVEL NOTE FOR TRAVEL BY AUTOMOBILE OUT OF THE SOVIET UNION AS IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO PROCEED "DIRECTLY" WITHOUT INTERMEDIATE STOPS FOR GASOLINE OR MEALS. HOWEVER, WE HAVE NOT BEEN SUBMITTING TRAVEL NOTES FOR DIRECT TRAIN TRAVEL OUT OF THE SOVIET UNION, SINCE WE REGARD SUCH TRAVEL AS COVERED BY MULTIPLE EXIT AND REENTRY VISAS IN DIPLOMATIC AND OFFICIAL PASSPORTS. WEEKLY COURIER TRIPS TO HELSINKI BY TRAIN VIA VYBORG, AND PERIODIC TRAVEL TO WARSAW (AND BEYOND) VIA BREST, WOULD OF COURSE BE AFFECTED BY THIS NEW TRAVEL NOTE REQUIREMENT.

6. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS. IF IT IS DECIDED THAT WE SHOULD COMPLY WITH NEW TRAVEL NOTE REQUIREMENT, EMBASSY WOULD RECOMMEND THAT DEPARTMENT CONSIDER REQUIRING THE SOVIET EMBASSY TO SUBMIT A TRAVEL NOTE FOR PERSONNEL TRAVELING FROM WASHINGTON TO NEW YORK FOR EXIT FROM THE U.S. (IF THIS IS NOT THE DEPARTMENT'S CURRENT PRACTICE), AND PERHAPS AS WELL FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SOVIET TRAVELERS TRANSITING THE U.S. (E.G. NEW YORK-MIAMI ENROUTE TO SOUTH AMERICA). EMBASSY CONSULAR SECTION FORESEES LITTLE NEGATIVE FALLOUT FROM SUCH ACTION FOR AMERICAN OFFICIALS TRANSITING SOVIET UNION.  
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